

SNC Reference  
Number

SNC 080136

## PROJECT SUMMARY

**County:** Madera and/or Fresno

**Applicant:** Coarsegold Resource Conservation District

**Project Title:** Sustainable Vegetation Management Pilot Program Planning Grant

## PROJECT GOAL

The goal of this planning phase is to bring together scientists, stakeholders and beneficiaries to design a pilot vegetation management program which will help promote a broader culture of effective vegetation management. The ultimate goal of the project is to develop a model for wide-spread vegetation management that can be financially sustained through contributions by those who obtain the 'ecosystem benefits'.

## PROJECT SCOPE

This planning grant will focus on the design of a vegetation management pilot program, utilizing the best scientific information on effective fuel management practices, which includes an evaluation of the benefits achieved through the program (to habitat, fire safety and water production) as well as the financial value of these benefits. The planning process will identify the stakeholders who are the most likely beneficiaries from the program and bring them into the process at the very beginning. Stakeholders will be encouraged to work with the scientists to design an evaluation that can demonstrate to them the benefits they obtain from vegetation management. The goal is to convince local stakeholders to provide sustainable funding for vegetation management based on the confirmed benefits to their organizations and entities. Through this we hope to pave the way for wide-spread vegetation management efforts, both locally and throughout the region, which are sustained through buy-in from the principal beneficiaries.

Nature and Extent of Work: The work completed under this grant will consist of a one-year planning and collaboration building process, which will lead to a four-year implementation/evaluation project. The planning process will include

- Identification of stakeholders related to vegetation management,
- Education of these stakeholders as to the way in which vegetation management provides them with direct and indirect benefits,
- Negotiation with the stakeholders regarding their participation with the pilot implementation evaluation project. The goal of the negotiation is to obtain agreement from the stakeholders to monitor the project and the evaluation of its benefits. If they are convinced by the process that vegetation management provides them with direct benefits, they will commit to supporting future vegetation management efforts.
- Bringing technical experts on fuel management (including the scientific site selection of fuel treatment programs, impacts on invasive species, etc.) together with local stakeholders to design the pilot implementation program in such a way that it will maximize ecosystem benefits, and designing an evaluation program sufficient to convince stakeholders of these benefits.
- Obtaining resources to implement the pilot program.

The desired outcomes from this planning grant are

- Design of an effective vegetation/fuels management implementation project and an associated evaluation program;
- Identification of funding sources for the implementation project and completion of funding applications;
- Commitment from stakeholders to monitor the results of the project and to respond to proof of benefits with future support for further vegetation management activities.

Role of Partners: This project will include a broad partnership of stakeholders in the following categories:

Roles	Partners/Stakeholders
Implement, administer and manage the program	Coarsegold RCD, NRCS
Coordinate with nearby watershed assessments and activities	Central Sierra Watershed Committee, Upper Fresno River Watershed Assessment, Upper San Joaquin River Watershed Council, Sierra RCD, Chowchilla/Red Top RCD
Provide technical information regarding fuel treatment, local conditions, future fuel plans, etc. and help to design pilot study	US Forest Service, UC Cooperative Extension, UC Fire Center, SNAMP, Kings River Watershed Project, Eastern Madera County Fire Safe Council, Department of Fish and Game, CalFIRE, etc.
Help plan implementation program, evaluation of benefits of vegetation management, and potential for future support	Water and irrigation Districts, Wildlife groups (possibly including California Deer Association, National Wild Turkey Federation, National Rifle Association, Ducks unlimited, etc.), Emergency preparedness groups, Counties, DWR, NRCS, etc.

Information on match: There are two ongoing efforts that will support this planning process:

1. Watershed assessments are taking place in two adjacent watersheds; the Upper Fresno River and the Upper San Joaquin River. The Fresno River watershed assessment includes a study area on vegetation management with the specific focus on improving wildlife habitat and water quality/quantity. Since there is only a modest amount of resources allocated to that study area in the watershed assessment grant, the Technical Advisory Committee for the assessment has agreed that it would be cost effective to partner with this effort. The assessment project's watershed consultant, Dr. Gretchen Coffman at WRA, Inc, will provide technical assistance to this project in reviewing the studies on vegetation management methodologies and assisting in the design of the proposed four-year implementation/evaluation project. In addition, the Upper San Joaquin River Watershed Program includes Vegetation Management/ Fire Safety as part of the assessment effort. They have agreed to share resources and collaborate with this proposed program
2. The Natural Resources Conservation Service has provided a grant to the Coarsegold Resource Conservation District for a part time staff person to do outreach for existing vegetation management programs (such as EQIP and WHIP) and to help develop resources for new vegetation management programs. This person will provide staffing assistance for this effort. Both the NRCS and the CRCD are very enthusiastic about this project as a way to increase the resources for future vegetation management efforts.

#### LETTERS OF SUPPORT LIST

Natural Resources Conservation Service – Madera Office	Eastern Madera County Emergency Preparedness Committee
Central Sierra Watershed Committee	Chowchilla Red Top RCD
Upper San Joaquin River Watershed Stewardship Council (Sierra RCD)	Sierra National Forest, Bass Lake Ranger District
San Joaquin Valley Resource Conservation and Development District	Carolyn Hunsaker, Researcher, Kings River Experimental Watershed Project
Eastern Madera County Fire Safe Council	National Wild Turkey Federation
U.C. Cooperative Extension – Madera Office	Ahwahnee Community Council
Yosemite Sequoia Resource Conservation and Development District	Tom Wheeler, Madera County Supervisor, District 5

### SNC PROJECT DELIVERABLES AND SCHEDULE

TASKS	MONTHS	DELIVERABLES
Collection of scientifically established methods on fuel management methods and their benefits to fire safety, habitat and water quantity and quality	1-2	Collection and synopsis of vegetation management methods
Identification of fuel management beneficiaries, stakeholders, and resources	1-3	List of stakeholders and resources
Educational brochures and presentations regarding the benefits of fuel management for stakeholders;	2-4	1-2 brochures and 1 power point presentation
A program of workshops (minimum 3 sessions) for stakeholders to discuss sustainable vegetation management and assist in the design of a pilot study	4-7	Workshop notes
Six Month Progress Review	6	Six-month Progress Report
Design of pilot study to measure benefits of vegetation management;	6-8	Pilot study design – concept paper
Preliminary agreement among stakeholders regarding support of sustainable vegetation management program pending results of pilot study;	6-10	Preliminary stakeholder agreement – concept paper/ MOU
Development of budget and workplan for pilot study (implementation and evaluation program);	8-10	Pilot study workplan and budget
Completion of implementation funding requests.	10-12	2 Funding requests
Final Project Review/Performance Measure Report	12	Final Project and Performance Measure Report

### SNC PROJECT COSTS

PROJECT BUDGET CATEGORIES	TOTAL SNC FUNDING
Collection of existing information on vegetation management methodology and benefits	\$1200
ID beneficiaries, stakeholders, resources	\$2400
Educational Brochures and presentations for stakeholders	\$0
Workshops to get input into study design and evaluation	\$2700
Design Pilot Study	\$2400
Negotiation of preliminary agreements to support sustainable vegetation management program based on results of pilot study	\$14900
Develop workplan and budget for pilot program implementation	\$1200
Complete funding requests for pilot program implementation	\$6900
Project and performance measure reports	\$600
Additional project support and administration	\$2400
Expenses and supplies (mileage, printing, etc.)	\$500
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$35,200</b>